

VZCZCXRO0726
PP RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHJA #3211 3240713
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 200713Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7123
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHJA/ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1151
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1606
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2043
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4510
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 0456
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS JAKARTA 003211

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, INR/EAP
NSC FOR EPHU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ID](#) [ML](#)

SUBJECT: INDONESIA WINS INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY AWARD

REF: JAKARTA 2051

11. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate Surabaya.

12. (U) SUMMARY: Indonesia was recently awarded the Democracy Medal by the International Association of Political Consultants--the latest acknowledgement of Indonesia's remarkable democratic success story. The award recognized Indonesia for the outstanding democratic progress it has made since the fall of Suharto in 1998, and for proving that democracy and Islam can co-exist. President Yudhoyono accepted the award at a ceremony held in Bali. This award--plus Freedom House's recent high ranking--highlight Indonesia's standing among democratic countries. END SUMMARY.

SHINING EXAMPLE

13. (U) On November 12, the International Association of Political Consultants (IAPC) awarded Indonesia the Democracy Medal at a ceremony in Bali. Founded in 1968, the IAPC represents an international collection of political consultants and political science experts "dedicated to fostering democracy" throughout the world. The President of the Association, Ben Goddard (an AmCit), called Indonesia "a shining example of hope" and praised the world's largest Muslim majority nation for demonstrating the compatibility of democratic and Islamic values. IAPC's Asia head, Pri Sulisto (an Indonesian political consultant), noted that Indonesia increasingly "serves as an example for Asian countries, some of which are still ruled by iron-fisted regimes."

14. (U) Indonesia received the award as a result of the democratic progress made since the fall of Suharto in 1998. In his presentation of the award, Goddard specifically noted the role of the Indonesian people in bringing the Suharto era to a close. Goddard also cited Indonesia's successful 2004 presidential elections--generally recognized as one of the larger single-day elections in the world's history. The award citation further noted that since 2004, Indonesia has consolidated its fledgling democratic traditions by conducting a series of direct gubernatorial and district-level elections. In 2006, for example, Indonesia upheld the election of a former separatist rebel as governor of Aceh.

SBY'S COMMENTS

15. (U) In accepting the award "on behalf of the Indonesian people," Yudhoyono noted that "the heart and soul of Indonesia remains moderate and progressive" and that "in Indonesian democracy, Islam and modernity go hand in hand." The President also suggested that democracy in Indonesia had reached a point of "no return." The event received prominent media coverage in Indonesia, including photos of a beaming SBY accepting the award.

RECOGNIZING AN IMPRESSIVE RECORD

16. (SBU) Indonesians were clearly gratified by the Democracy Medal. The award--plus Indonesia's recent high-ranking by Freedom House--underscore Indonesia's newfound standing among democratic countries. Indonesia has not yet fully assimilated its post-Suharto position in the international community and still does not see itself to be in the business of exporting democratic norms. That said, it is becoming used to seeing itself as model of sorts for the successful transition from autocracy to democracy.

HEFFERN